

April 9, 1990

LB 1031, 1129
LR 368

override attempts to be made today when viewed from its impact on people. This is the \$2,225,000 appropriation for the '90-91 year for the mental retardation regions in the State of Nebraska. We debated this at some length. I'm not going to take a lot of time introducing it, so I will close the opening statement on that tone.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Thank you. For discussion purposes the Chair recognizes Senators Wesely, Warner and Hannibal. Senator Wesely.

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, members. I wasn't here when the original amendment was adopted to the bill to provide for this additional funding. Had I been here, I would have argued against that amendment and the way it was offered. The reason is not so much that I opposed additional funding for mental retardation services, but the fact that language was stricken from the bill that would have provided for individual client contracts, after July 1st of this year. And that proposal was contained in a bill that was introduced by Senator Warner and myself in the Health and Human Services Committee, LB 1129. Actually a much broader concept was introduced at that time to try and reform the mental retardation system in the state, to recognize that we had a serious problem, a serious crisis occurred this last six months in that system, and that we needed to look at some changes to provide for greater communication and greater accountability. We should not allow a situation like that to repeat itself, as we're looking now at a two some...2.2 million dollar question right now. This problem then is perpetuated into the future, unless some changes are made. Now, we have introduced a study resolution which will be a priority of the...the number one priority of the Health and Human Services Committee, LR 368, to look at the service system, the mental retardation system. We have been allocated \$75,000 to do that study, and I plan to spend a great deal of time on that, and feel that this Legislature is dedicated to studying this very important problem. But the question before us is, do we or do we not support an override of the Governor's veto and expend another 2.2 million dollars in this area? This is not an easy question for me. If we had adopted this additional money with some accountability language, some additional accountability language included in that appropriation, I would have felt very comfortable with that change. Because then what we would have said, the message would have been, yes, we're willing to expend money to meet our mental retardation needs,